

THE COMING
OF PHILIBERT

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THE COMING OF PHILIBERT



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BY
SARA KING WILEY

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To Theodore Roosevelt

Not honoured only for far-seeing strength
And wisdom whence all nations gather good,
But for the man he is: he seems to glow,
A vivid fire of love that pulses warm,
Enkindling, round about, the running flame.
I think he would be glad to take the hand,
And know the heart, and labour in the life,
Of every soul on earth; his eager mind
Enters in every cranny of men's lives,
And comes to succour and to understand.

ACT III. 1.

THE COMING OF PHILIBERT

PERSONS REPRESENTED

CONRAD OF HOHENSTAUFEN, the King of Artacia.

PHILIBERT, his twin brother.

NICCOLÒ CARACCIOLI, the chancellor of Artacia.

GIORDANO CARACCIOLI, his elder brother.

LUIGI OF RAVELLO, the King's favourite.

ANDREA SOLARIO, a noble gentleman of Artacia.

JACOPO, a jester.

PIETRO, a peasant boy.

CLEMENTIA, the daughter of Niccolò Caraccioli.

RENÉE, the daughter of Giordano and ward of Niccolò.

LUCREZIA, the foster-mother of Philibert.

MARIA, her daughter.

Nobles and Ladies, Soldiers, Servants, and Children.

The scene is at first in the palace at Castellamare, the capital city of Artacia; then in the woods near Castel del Monte; then again at Castellamare.

THE COMING OF PHILIBERT

ACT I

SCENE I

The tower room, called the Eagle's Eyrie, in the King's palace at Castellamare.

CONRAD *and* LUIGI

LUIGI

Your majesty too early quits the dance.
I fear, dear lord, the coming of your crown
Hath cast a shadow on that eager brow,
And greatness hangs above you like a storm,
Blotting our happy sun.

CONRAD

My gentle friend,
Who knowest all a king may ever tell
Of his hid heart, thou hast divined aright.

And yet 'tis strange that giving me a crown
Should move me, when its majesty was mine
Since I could know myself—a ceremony
Which gives the symbol of the abiding power;
'Tis like betrothal of two steadfast hearts
That long have loved.

LUIGI

That too shall be your fate.

CONRAD

Luigi, there points my hope. You know my will:
And fair Clementia must know as well,
Though I have plucked and held so many flowers,
That she alone shall ever crown my brows.
You see, my mind runs back to crowns, and crowns,
In every simile. Three brief days hence
I shall assume my crown; forget my crown,
To wreath about the idle heavy gold
The bloom and fragrance of a crown of love.
That day the world is carpet for my feet,
And sullen fate shall be obsequious,
Life, set her brimming goblet to my lips;
Never was man so happy. Yet to-night

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There is a lack of ease about my breath,
A trembling of my heart. It is not fear?

LUIGI

Great king, fear is your sword.

CONRAD

What could there be
Ever, for me to fear? My days are joy.

LUIGI

Your kingdom worships you.

CONRAD

Go hastily
And bring that lady who shall be my queen,
Clementia. I have a half-hour yet
Before the chancellor must speak to me
Of certain weighty matters. [*There is a step without.*
Who is there?

LUIGI

Only the jester.

[*He goes out.*

CONRAD

Jacopo, come in.

JACOPO *enters.*

JACOPO

Folly is always messenger of dames,
For wisdom holds them silent, folly speaks.
O ladies, ladies, should you seldom speak,
All men would think you perfect.

CONRAD

—And most dull.

JACOPO

The lady April hath a tear, or smile,
To cast upon you.

CONRAD

She is welcome, fool.

JACOPO

Lady Renée! The thunder doth not roll,
And Jove hath bowed his curls.

RENÉE *comes in, pausing near the entrance.*

RENÉE

Stay, Jacopo!

CONRAD

Renée, come here. You need not tremble, child.

RENÉE

You left the dance. You would not smile at me,
You dropped my flowers from a careless hand.
Oh, is your majesty in any grief?
Or are you ill?

CONRAD

Not now in any grief.
Forgive my ugly and ungallant mien;
You do?

RENÉE

O sire, there's nothing to forgive!

CONRAD

Nay, but there is; and seal forgiveness—thus.
[He kisses her.]

JACOPO

Renée, you will provoke him to more sin.

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CONRAD

Soon this dark room, like frowning garden walls,
Shall close about the blossoms of our court.
Your cousin comes.

RENÉE

Clementia comes here?
Then I must go. You call me April, sire,
And April must be gone ere June draw nigh.

JACOPO

Well, I must shuffle to find out fair May
And shift her off before proud June is here.

[RENÉE and JACOPO go out.]

NICCOLÒ CARACCIOLI and CLEMENTIA come in.

CONRAD

Welcome as summer, bright Clementia!
This cold and sombre place, my childhood's dread,
Beams in the benediction of your grace;
No more a soulless spot, where you have trod;—
A room redeemed by memories of you.

CLEMENTIA

This is the Eagle's Eyrie; your great sire
Toiled at those plans which made Artacia great
Here, and the place is precious in his sight
Who loves Artacia.

CONRAD

I shall build a room;
And you must tell me now your way to build.

CLEMENTIA

You cannot build a dwelling in a night.
Look at this boar's head, see these rusted swords,
These crumbling maps, this anchor of a ship,
These piles of manuscript sallow with dust,
This wounded eagle grasping in his claw
The tattered flags that gave us victory,
That scared the uncouth Hun, made haughty Spain
Retreat across her borders, and gave peace
To our dear country— Tears have choked my
speech.
This is a great man's heart, no builded room.

CONRAD

Lucia, my dear mother, so men say,
Made him that king he was; for all our lives
Are moulded by such hands as this I hold,
So small and tender, yet so powerful
To make a king a god—or man a brute

CLEMENTIA

A hero should be stronger than his fate.

CONRAD

Yet Hercules sat dumbly spinning wool.
No man can rise beyond his lady's heart,
He can aspire to reach her, and no more.
You women are the promise of our lives.
Do you not weary of my father's praise,
Sung like the songs of Homer?

CLEMENTIA

No, my lord.
Such greatness as creates the world anew
Has the full, constant worship of my heart.

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CONRAD

Surely I can be great as well as he.

CLEMENTIA

Surely you can, my king, an if you will.

CONRAD

Clementia, I will.

CLEMENTIA

I must retire;

I know my father would have speech with you.

CONRAD

Yet stay!

CLEMENTIA

When most I wish for eloquence
The blank unwisdom of my tardy speech
Appals me. I would pray you, from my heart,
That you forsake forever those dark things
Which cheat your people of their earnest wish
To honour and to love you.

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CONRAD

Sweet, good-night.

[She goes.]

I am attentive to your words, my lord.
You have foretold this hour; within three days
You lay aside the task of regency
So honourably held; and, ere I take
The crown upon me, I must bear the weight
Of a strange, fateful secret of my race.
Midnight is near, the dancers still are gay
In the great hall below, but in this tower
'Tis almost quiet, the high throbbing notes
Of distant music, through an opened door,
Flutter the plumes of silence stealthily.
The place and time befit that secret's birth:
Then speak, my lord. I knew no father's care
Save yours, and what you shortly shall resign
You shall receive again.

NICCOLÒ

My honoured king,
I shall not be so idle as to say
I do not guess the meaning of your words.

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That the most precious guerdon of your choice
Is given to my sweet daughter, is to me
Golden reward for years of happy toil.

CONRAD

Then let me call you *Father*, moving on
In gay anticipation some bright months.
What is the secret you would have me know?

NICCOLÒ

Your mighty father, wisest of us all,
When treacherous-warring illness gained apace
On that strong citadel, his princely heart,
Was wont to say: "The world moves swiftly on,
While I grow weary of the encumbered race
And turn me to my rest. I shall not cast
A net beyond me to entrap the feet
That come where I no longer hope to tread:
My son shall not be bound by my dead words.
For if he meditate upon my life
He shall discern the banners I upheld,
And he can bear them forward if he will."

CONRAD

Think you my father would be gratified
To see the son that now attends his word?

NICCOLÒ

What man, what king was ever worthier
Than him I joy to serve? Your father's eyes
Were glad to gaze upon you.

CONRAD

It is well.

NICCOLÒ

On that great night when for Artacia
So much was given and so much was lost,
When that beloved lady, our dread queen,
Brought to the birth yourself, our future king,
And gave us, with that gift, her life as well,—
Even at that hour a second son was born,
And lives unknown, unknowing.

CONRAD

Lives—still lives?

Who dared to keep this from me?

NICCOLÒ

Our great king,
Manfred, your father, whose high memory
Towers above us as the cloud-crowned crest
Of Ætna soars above the island hills.

CONRAD

Where is this prince, and how hath he been reared?

NICCOLÒ

Far in the wooded hills a castle stands,
Castel del Monte called, a hunting-lodge;
There hath he dwelt in ignorance of his birth.
Sire, your wise father told us not his mind;
It ever was enough to speak his will.
Giordano and myself, his childhood's friends,
Stood at his side to go unquestioning
Down any path his finger pointed out.
Two others on that night, the leech, the nurse,
Both long since dead, both faithful to their vows,
Were all that knew this secret, now your own.

CONRAD

It is a marvel he hath not returned
To struggle for my throne. Who holds him there?

NICCOLÒ

One whose rapt influence, stern and mystical,
Might fit him well to rule in some far heaven,
But only makes him serve on this our earth.

CONRAD

You speak in riddles.

NICCOLÒ

Ah, your pardon, sire.

It is my brother who has charge of him,
My elder brother, born to be a saint;
He would have taken orders in his youth,
But that our father, whom we held in love
Greater than mere obedience, did forbid.
Our father's will was mighty, and reached forth
To shape us to his liking day by day;
So he, the elder son, was trained to arms,
And I was set to books, who loved the court

And the fine handling of the minds of men.
He struggles impotently who would turn
Old grandam Nature from her purposes;
Her web is made ere ours, of stronger woof.
My eyes were ever off the lettered scroll
To glimpse the court, my brother's mighty arms
Yearned only to sustain a falling toe.
So, when our father rested on his shield,
Soon, soon we turned to the fore-destined path;
Giordano sought the woods to dream and pray,
And I, ambitious, served a neighbouring prince.

CONRAD

And on the night that I was born, you said—?

NICCOLÒ

The king, your father, called us unto him
To hear the burden that he had devised:
I was to guard you here, so ran his word,
Giordano rear your brother in the woods.
“Those sweet, fanatic notions of the world
Can do no harm in one who will not rule

Save over beasts," he said, and laid his arm
Tenderly on my brother's shoulders broad.
"Giordano, you will love my little son;
He will be happier than his brother here,
Will wear a green oak chaplet for a crown,
Which will not press his temples hard nor chafe
His curls to baldness; and, if it should chance
That Conrad die before he have an heir,
Artacia can stand a holy king
As well as any country upon earth,
Nor take contagion of such malady."

CONRAD

None holds, I think, more sacred than myself
The honour of my father's memory,
Yet I, reared in this bounteous later day,
Must surely have a certain eminence
Of outlook over his; the course of time
Still upward leads us on the hills of thought,
And what were done in honesty and right
In early days, our broader vision sees
Wrong in relation to that larger world
Now spread beneath us. Values change with time.

NICCOLÒ

Sire, your dread father, not as lesser men,
Saw like the pilot far beyond the ship,
And steered her by the fixed stars of heaven.
I cannot think his son—

CONRAD

You need not think.
Friend of my father, keep that early place
And tread the path your king will show to you.
It were unfitting to my dignity,
Unworthy the great heritage I bear,
Nay, a reproach unto my race, my day,
If I were bound to look through dead men's eyes.
I act as master of this nation's good.
Shall not her king stand forth an honest man,
King of all honest men, inflexible,
Who will not wear the chains of other days
On his young limbs, the chains of elder wrong;
But shakes them off whenas he takes his crown?
Go to that forest castle on this night,
Bring back my brother from his exile there
Both undeserved and by me undesired:

I'll right him in the eyes of all the world,
And set him here, a prince, beside my throne.
This be my first deed of authority;
The son shall clear away the father's sin.

NICCOLÒ

No sin!

CONRAD

My lord, the king is judge of that.

NICCOLÒ

Your father took a danger from your side
To save this nation from the chance of war,
And will you bring the peril back to us?

CONRAD

I think this nation wholly satisfied
With the one king they have. Is it not so?
You are not wont to be so slow of speech.
I fear your age tells on your mind, my lord.

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NICCOLÒ

Dread king, you know I love and honour you;
And, worshipping, this people stoops to you
For leave to kiss your dear and royal hand.

CONRAD

Well, then, I think my brother may come home
And I not fear a rival in their love.
Clementia will honour me for this,
And call me greater than my father was.

NICCOLÒ

O sire, I do beseech you, at your knees
Laying this head in prostrate humbleness,
Turn yet aside from venturing this path,
And let your father's wisdom still prevail.

CONRAD

Rise, rise, lord chancellor! What act is this,
Unfitting to your dignity and mine?
I think you said my father left the choice
Within my hands when come to king's estate?

Then question not again your king's command,
Lest you should sully that clear loyalty
Which hath enfolded you like this rich robe,
The sign of your high office. When departs
Obedience from before the face of kings,
Honour perforce must follow. Urge me not
To loss of you before I gain my crown,
But hasten on your errand. Three days hence
Let my lost brother stand beside my throne.

SCENE II

Morning. The ilex grove near Castel del Monte.

NICCOLÒ CARACCIOLI *and* ANDREA SOLARIO *enter.*

ANDREA

They told me at the castle that their lord,
Your brother, sir, walked forth along these paths,
Speaking with such still reverence one would use
In telling of a holy man at beads.
And "Philibert"—thus simply spoke the clown—
Had gone a-hunting in the forest near.

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NICCOLÒ

These ancient gnarled grey trees seem all at prayer,
With crooked arms uplift: a twinkling light
Spatters these rugged stones, some Roman cut
Into dim creeping monsters.

ANDREA

See the shrine
Bright through that aisle, and two carved saints
at prayer.

NICCOLÒ

I hear a pacing step approach us. Go,
Await me at the castle.

ANDREA

And I hear
A crash of boughs—some creature—

PHILIBERT (*without*)

Master! Master!

NICCOLÒ

I shall conceal myself and watch them here;
Best first to see them with their armour off.

[ANDREA goes out; NICCOLÒ conceals himself.]

GIORDANO CARACCIOLI comes in slowly, reading a breviary half aloud: PHILIBERT, wreathed with vines, enters from the woods; he wears a rough garment and carries many blossoming boughs.

GIORDANO

Come here, my son; what strange attire is this?
You look like Bacchus or his worshipper.

PHILIBERT

Spring lifted up my eyelids ere the dawn;
The clamour of exulting little birds
Shook all the dewy air; the gentle breeze
Brought perfume to my dreams, of loves unknown.

GIORDANO

Speak not so wildly, Philibert, for love
Is over all His world, a holy thing.

PHILIBERT

I left my Homer lying in the sun—
To-day his songs were only scribbled ink.
Pietro and small Maria soundly slept;
I passed, I did not want their company.
There was a mystic lure breathed from the wood;
The delicate new green was white with dew,
These vines were gemmed, the birds were carolling;
How everything was breaking into bloom,
And every stick and clod astir with life!
May I not take these rosy-petalled boughs
Into the chapel before tierce shall ring,
To wreathe about our Blessed Lady's feet,
So that the Holy Babe may smile to see
The coming of the spring He made so fair
By conquest over sorrow and the grave?

GIORDANO

Go, dearest child, and may He bless thy deed.
What hast thou, cherished there against thy breast?

PHILIBERT

This wounded leveret. Warm and still he lies,
Panting with pain. He knows I'll care for him.

Master, my great wild family to-day
Came close about me in the mystic dawn;
A deer pressed his moist nose against my hand,
Then bounded off. The birds lit on my hair—
I was like blessed Francis to their love
That happy moment, so I sang to them
His songs that told them sweetly about God.

GIORDANO

It is my constant marvel, Philibert,
That you can hurt these creatures that you love,
And track them out to slay them—

PHILIBERT

Speak it not

To-day, dear master!

GIORDANO

But some other day
You will be eager as destroying fire.

PHILIBERT

I cannot tell. I think I have to fight.
O master, I have something I would say;

Long has it pressed and pressed against my lips,
And now this morning in the living woods
Has brought it unto speech.

GIORDANO

I hear, my son.

PHILIBERT

Your kind face darkens and grows strange to me;
It is a wicked thing that I must say.

GIORDANO

Can you not pray, and drive away the thought?

PHILIBERT

I've prayed for many hours, and it is here:
Still, still it grows, like spring that bursts in bloom.

GIORDANO

Kneel down and tell me all your anxious heart.

[GIORDANO *scats himself upon a stone bench*; PHILIBERT *lays down his burdens carefully and coming to the side of* GIORDANO *kneels and clasps his hands.*

PHILIBERT

Let me go forth! Let me go forth and live!
It is not life, not life, within this wood!
I want to see great towns climb on the blue,
To walk through narrow, sounding streets, and watch
The crowds that push and shout on holy-days;
Hear clamorous bells call, dancing to and fro,
And hear the trumpets ringing down the lists,
And then the trampling steeds, and crash of spears,
The exultant din; to see great armies march,
With banners snapping and bright flashing steel,
In ordered rank supremely moving on,
That cry, to shake the vault, "God and the king!

[He springs to his feet.

God and Artacia!" Ah, I cannot kneel!
There let me live, and there, oh, let me die,
Bold in their front against some hardy foe.
Give me a man to fight, more strong than I!
Give me an arm shall beat against my arm
And strike it down until I win its power!
A brain more keen to match against my brain!
I'll win a friend to shelter with my breast;
I'll learn to sing the lays of troubadours;

And I must see a woman ere I die,
A young sweet woman, with bright lengths of hair,
And gentle laughing lips, and clear deep eyes,
Soft arms I'll catch and kiss, and swift small hands!
She beckons me in dreams; and through the night
I hear the calls of warriors, and the neigh
Of marching horses, and the ring of spears.
You lived.

GIORDANO

I did not love that shallow life:

PHILIBERT

Let me despise it then, but let me first
Adventure for myself!

GIORDANO

The Unhappy One

By snare of young desire hath tempted you:
This poison you would drink will cloud your eyes;
How clear you see the world your God hath made
To love it now—

PHILIBERT

I'd see the wider world
And love it too, and serve it as His knight!

GIORDANO

Kneel here and hold your peace. This was a sin.
Before your votive candle fast and pray,
Where in the quiet church a single light
Proclaims the Presence that shall make you safe.

PHILIBERT

This radiant day, shut in!

GIORDANO

You disobey?
Is my command no longer dear to you?

PHILIBERT

Forever dear, my master: frown not so!
I shall go straightway in, to strive for grace,
And use your discipline! Forgive me now.

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GIORDANO

Depart, and cleanse your spirit of this sin.

[PHILIBERT *goes out*.

NICCOLÒ *comes from among the trees*.

NICCOLÒ

Giordano!

GIORDANO

Brother, are you come at last?

Draw close, and let me feel that you are here,
Nor mar my happiness by word or thought.

NICCOLÒ

And do you care?

GIORDANO

Capacity to love,
A feeble plant, waxes to mighty bloom
In God's strong sunshine.

NICCOLÒ

No, you have not changed!

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GIORDANO

How fares my daughter?

NICCOLÒ

Merry every day:
The child of her French mother—not yourself.

GIORDANO

Your daughter?

NICCOLÒ

Why,—the wantonness of fate—
I often think my daughter is like you.
Sit on this carven bench and let us talk;
What pleasure to speak openly once more!
I am beset with cautions at the court.
Giordano, now I know what I have lost
In losing your frank eyes through all these years.

GIORDANO

There must be many honest at the court.
First, tell me of the king, what man he is.

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NICCOLÒ

A sun, in whose bright orbit all do move,
Whom to admire is turning to the light,
To follow is to tread a gracious path;
Learning and courtesy are ministers
To crown his beaming brow.

GIORDANO

Enough, enough!
I trust you do not tell the youth such words.

NICCOLÒ

Incessantly, my brother.

GIORDANO

Thou hast said
Only, his clothes are good, his body trained.
I asked what man he is—put me not off.

NICCOLÒ

Giordano, I have served the king so long
I scarcely think of him as merely man.

GIORDANO

Served him? You trained him from his babyhood,
Watching his growth with pitiless, keen eyes.
Come, brother—

NICCOLÒ

Nay, I have a duty first.
I come to take your jewel from the mine.
The king hath summoned Philibert to him.

GIORDANO

He shall not go. King Manfred gave him me.

NICCOLÒ

But Conrad doth command his presence now,
And it is treason to refuse.

GIORDANO

That boy?
Surely he will respect his father's wish.
I will persuade the king to leave him here.

NICCOLÒ

You guide me to the subject whence I turned.
This king is like a ship whose helm is gone,

That drives adrift, impelled by wanton winds;
His graces and his virtues he assumes
Only because he finds they are admired;
He hath not in him one sound root of good,
Of steady virtue, severed from the hope
Of gaining praise. He studies every eye,
And loves to paint his portrait on men's minds
In noble strokes and colours luminous;
Displaying first a splendour, then a grace—
To watch men dazzle. I have seen him stand,
Gazing Narcissus-like within his glass,
Drinking his beauty like a draught of wine.
He has been fed on praise until the meat
Has formed his body and his mind and soul.

GIORDANO

You stand and say this, and you have no shame,
You, that have made this horror?

NICCOLÒ

Nay, not so.

You cannot judge of my necessity.
I could not cross the king, he was my lord,

Tyrannical from birth; I had to live,
And make him love me.

GIORDANO

Now, you bid me cast
Before the swinish court my single pearl.

NICCOLÒ

This poor caged bird shall try his little wings
And take no hurt. The king will laugh at him
And favour him; his meek and awkward port
Shall heighten Conrad's magnanimity.
But jests aside, Giordano, he must go,
And on the instant. Send for him, I beg.

GIORDANO

I will not have him go.

NICCOLÒ

Be ruled by me.
The king will send his soldiers, swift as fire,
To cast us into prison, forget us there

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And bear the lad away, to wreak on him
His wrath; in anger he is pitiless.

GIORDANO

(Calling) Pietro, Pietro!

PIETRO

(Entering)

I am with you, sir!

GIORDANO

What hast thou done to my poor lemon trees?

PIETRO

Master, I set them on the terrace there
Only till midday, while the sun is warm.

GIORDANO

It is too chill, and thou must bear them in.
Go seek for Philibert within the church
And bid him hither on the instant.

[PIETRO goes out.]

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NICCOLÒ

No,

Young Conrad is not like your gentle lad.
He seems ten years the elder.

GIORDANO

Is he fair?

NICCOLÒ

Bright-haired are both, even as their fathers were,
And much alike, save that on Conrad's brow
Are set the lines of passion and wild days.

GIORDANO

Is he a warrior?

PHILIBERT *approaches.*

NICCOLÒ

No; alas for us!

His only conquests are in Cupid's wars.

GIORDANO

Silence! Come here, my child. Be not amazed.
Salute my younger brother, Niccolò;

He is from court and has a word for you.
Pluck not my gown, and do not tremble so.

PHILIBERT

You have forgiven me?

GIORDANO

Beloved boy,
I fear you have been harsh unto yourself,
I should have gone with you. Your face is pale.
You are forgiven indeed; what must I say?
I am too old to bear distressful days,
I never knew how old until this hour.
Nay, but I will not leave you with him yet.
Speak on.

NICCOLÒ

I am a friendly oracle,
To tell you everything that you would know.

PHILIBERT

My swarming questions block the doors of speech.
Of course, I want to know about myself;

My master here has taught me everything,
I think, that's wise and great, but of myself
Only that I am weak and ignorant,
Which I had known too well before he spoke.
My parentage, my race, oh, quickly speak!
My ears are waiting, hungry, for your words!

GIORDANO

I would not have you feed this foolish lad
With poison-fruit, if I might have my way.

NICCOLÒ

Well, Philibert, you come of a great race.

GIORDANO

Aye, feed his vanity!

NICCOLÒ

Prithee, give o'er.

I shall not stint the truth, but say my say.
What hath been told you of your parentage?

PHILIBERT

I know my mother was of this sweet land
That turns a glowing cheek unto the sun,

So I was taught the golden Latin lore;
My father was of Teuton race, of those
Strong, bright-haired Northerners who came to snatch
Artacia from surrounding enemies
And make her great. My father was most wise;
He had a power where I have but a fault:
My mother was a radiance from heaven;
She did not give to me her gentleness,
Nor her unfailing gracious courtesy.
I sometimes marvel that I am no more
When they were both so wonderful; 'tis strange!
My master said he told me all the truth
That could advance the welfare of my soul,
But answered not the question I had asked.
I mean—alas! I speak confusedly—
I did not ask about my father's soul,
Which is in heaven, but of his earthly state,
Which is important to his son on earth.

GIORDANO

Boy, was it nothing, then, to your light mind
To know how wise and great a sire you had?

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PHILIBERT

Indeed, it gave me royal pride of heart.

NICCOLÒ

His is a royal soul that thus can speak,
And worthy offspring of a royal sire.

PHILIBERT

What do you say?

NICCOLÒ

Your father was a king.

PHILIBERT

A king!

GIORDANO

Forget not, earthly state is mean
In heaven's sight.

PHILIBERT

And is my father dead?

GIORDANO

You are not king—nor ever will be king.

PHILIBERT

Not king! I thought you said my father was—

GIORDANO

Say not the word with such a fiery look.
Have you no thought of your great father's will
That sent you here to keep you from the path
Which now, alas! another bids you tread?
My poor weak lad, whose eyes are dazzled now
With the thin, tinsel glitter of a crown,
You are not king—your brother is the king.

PHILIBERT

My brother—richer joy than any crown!
I have a brother and I have a king:
A brother I can love, a king to serve.
Would God the gift of me were worthier!
I'll love him as no brother yet was loved,
And serve him as no king was ever served.

NICCOLÒ

You will be very lonely at the court.

ANDREA *comes in, and with him, weeping*, PIETRO,
MARIA, *and* LUCREZIA.

PHILIBERT

Why do you kneel, dear friends? And do not weep,
Dear foster-mother; Philibert is here.

LUCREZIA

I shall not see you more! They've taken you,
And they will set you in their armies soon;
You will be killed, among them, at the court.

MARIA

Oh, we have lost you! Who will care for us?

PHILIBERT

Am I not here, and shall I not return?

MARIA

Dread lord—

PHILIBERT

(*To NICCOLÒ*) She speaks to you—

NICCOLÒ

Your highness, no.

MARIA

You will despise us when you come again.

PHILIBERT

I think you all stark mad. Why, silly child,
Have two words changed the heart you know so
well?

NICCOLÒ

Who is this girl?

PHILIBERT

My little sister, sir.

MARIA

But you will not be here to do my work
When it is heavy. Who will lift the clothes,
And bring me fagots, and chase off the dogs,

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And wash the linen on the bitter days
When my poor fingers ache?

PHILIBERT

(*To NICCOLÒ*) Is it too far
For me to come again to wash her clothes
When all the fount is ice?

NICCOLÒ

I fear it is.

MARIA

Take your poor Pietro with you, noble lord;
See how he weeps and dares not speak to you.

PHILIBERT

(*To ANDREA*) She speaks to you, kind sir.

ANDREA

Your highness, no.

PHILIBERT

Maria, if my master will permit.

Act I

The Coming of Philibert

45

MARIA

O Philibert, he is not master now!

PHILIBERT

Be still; he is. My master all my life;
Both yours and mine. Sister, you anger me!
There, there, you are a child! I'll bring to you
Red bows and silver pins. Pietro, get on!

GIORDANO

Since you are summoned to the wretched world,
Be such that all who meet you shall thank God.

PHILIBERT

I will, dear master; you shall yet rejoice
That I went forth to serve my country now
In the new vigour of my youthful strength,
Armed with the precious wisdom of your age
And your most dear example. (*To NICCOLÒ*) As we
go,
You'll tell me, sir, about my brother's court.
I must not shame him; I'll be diligent

To learn their customs. My dear brother soon
Can teach me everything that I must do.
I'll lead his armies out against the foe,
And lay new laurels on his gold-crowned brow,
And bring new nations humbled to his throne,
Till he shall say, "In all Artacia,
My brother is the servant that serves best,
Because he loves to serve." And some fair day
When he shall wed the lady of his love
She'll call me *Brother* too, and turn to me
To help her in a thousand little ways
He has not time to find, till they shall say,
"Our brother is the pillar of our house."

NICCOLÒ

This dream will vanish in the vulgar day.

PHILIBERT

Will you not bless me, master?

GIORDANO

May the Lord,
Thy shepherd, lead thee in the paths of light!

Thou art a weakling lamb cast among wolves;
May He defend thee, lest they feed on thee.
Here shouldst thou still have dwelt in sober peace,
Rich in a holy life. Son of my prayers,
My pitiful dim age leaned on thine arm,
Thy full heart warm against this chilling breast:
Now am I left alone.

PHILIBERT

I shall return
Soon, soon, and cherish you even until death.

GIORDANO

Be thou like leaven set within the meal,
Working the slow and utter change therein,
Till the unwholesome dough is bread of life,
To give this nation strength.

PHILIBERT

God be my power!

GIORDANO

Go forth, and may the love whereby you live
Kindle in every breast responsive flame;

Remember how it is a thing divine;
Abound in pity and in tenderness,
Spending yourself to serve the need of all.

[He moves away.]

PHILIBERT

Dear master—

GIORDANO

Go. You seek for happiness.

PHILIBERT

I seek for love, which he that seeks shall find.

*[PHILIBERT goes with NICCO-
LÒ, ANDREA, and PIETRO.]*

ACT II

SCENE I

The throne-room. The King, just crowned, stands before the throne, with the Chancellor beside him. The nobles and ladies of Artacia fill the hall below, CLEMENTIA, RENÉE, JACOPO, LUIGI, towards the front.

CONRAD

(Ending his speech) Therefore this hand out-
stretched in sovereignty
Bestows a gift, this prince I give to you;
My people of Artacia, love him well.

ANDREA *enters with* PHILIBERT, *who wears still his rough garments; PHILIBERT, amazed, drawn forward by* ANDREA.

ANDREA

Yonder your brother stands. Approach, dear sir.

[PHILIBERT *falls upon his knees on the lowest step of the throne.*

CONRAD

Thrice welcome to my house and to my heart.
Hail, Philibert! Artacia welcomes you.

[PHILIBERT *raises his eyes and seeing his brother's arms outstretched he goes up and casts himself into them: then, urged by* CONRAD, *he turns, and faces the people.*

Nobles and people of Artacia,
Behold the gift I render unto you. [A cheer.

OLD NOBLEMAN

How like his honoured father is this prince!

ANOTHER NOBLEMAN

Prince Philibert is taller by a span,
And broader, than the king, and larger-limbed.

ANDREA

The king looks small and withered at his side.

Act II

The Coming of Philibert

51

CONRAD

(*Looking at PHILIBERT*) Step down a pace, my
brother, for the king
Alone must stand above.

PHILIBERT

Your pardon, sire.
[He steps down several degrees.]

CLEMENTIA

Look you, the king frowns on the lad!

ANDREA

Yea, true.

[CONRAD takes his brother's arm; they go down together and cross the room. PHILIBERT'S feet become entangled in the train of a lady's dress.]

CONRAD

They always trip us by some frippery!

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PHILIBERT

(*Kneeling*) Brother, I've trod upon a lady's gown:
I've torn the lace!

LADY

Arise, I pray you, sir!

PHILIBERT

Her eyes are like a deer's, so soft and sad.
Be comforted, for I can mend this lace.

CONRAD

Philibert, rise; a prince should never kneel,
Save to the king, and princes do not sew.

PHILIBERT

But see, the lady laughs behind her fan;
She has forgiven me. And you, you smile;
Then I may stay?

CONRAD

Why, whither should you go?

53

PHILIBERT

To read my prayers; I have, I know, done wrong.

JACOPO

Some here would weary heaven with their prayers
If every tumbled gown were so excused.

PHILIBERT

Then I am not more careless than the rest.

JACOPO

Oh, yes, my lord; you do it openly.

CONRAD

Peace, Jacopo! He searches you with eyes
That like a star upon a muddy pool
Find no reflection. *Honour to the child,*
Old Horace said.

PHILIBERT

You think I am a child;
That lady thought I was a boorish lad;

These garments are so poor. Your brother, sire,
Must have a better robe.

CONRAD

Ah, Philibert,
Courtier already! You shall have the best,
As many gaudy clothes as you desire.

PHILIBERT

As many as I wish? An hundred, then,
Three hundred! One, quite new, for every day!
I should not sleep for thinking all the night
If next day's cloak should be a red, a blue,
A gold, an ermine! And a golden chain;
Oh, brother, and a sword!

CONRAD

Gently, my boy!
Your voice is like a trumpet; see men stare.

PHILIBERT

Alas, I am so rude!

CONRAD

Withdraw a space
To this embrasure. Certain of our friends
Come hither also; we will talk aside.

LUIGI *comes forward.*

Here, Philibert, look on this gentleman;
He is my closest friend and counsellor.

PHILIBERT

Dear sir, I love you for my brother's sake.
[*He hesitates, scanning LUIGI's face.*]
You are but young to be a counsellor.

LUIGI

I hide much wisdom in an idle look.

PHILIBERT

Then I beseech you of your gentleness
To give me something from that precious store.
I know the virtue of an aged man
Who lives engirt by forests; I would know

The broader virtue of the world of men.
You are the sword the king holds at his side,
His love hath set you with a thousand gems.
Will you accept my service? He is dumb;
He will not care for me. He turns aside;
His body bows, but, see, his eyes are cold.

JACOPO

His eyes are twisted, looking at his nose;
His nose is out of joint.

CONRAD

Peace, Jacopo!

PHILIBERT

His nose is straight. What does the jester mean?
[*He turns and questions JACOPO.*]

LUIGI

(*Aside to the king*) They are well met, I think, that
there converse.

CONRAD

Luigi!

LUIGI

My sweetest lord, be harsh with me,
If you but turn your eyes upon my face,
That have not looked at me this weary hour,
The while you let your jester mock at me.

CONRAD

Take out the fool and let him smart for this!

[JACOPO *is dragged away.*

Fear not, dear Luigi; none on earth shall be
Betwixt thy king and thee.

LUIGI

The sun is out;
The heavy clouds have burst and rolled away.

PHILIBERT

What are they doing to the wretched fool?

ANDREA

Naught you can hinder.

PHILIBERT

Nay, but I will try.

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ANDREA

Pause, noble sir; you do the fool no good
And hurt yourself.

PHILIBERT

Myself? I do not care.

ANDREA

Be ruled by me. You do not know the court;
Believe me, Jacopo will suffer more
If you do speak.

PHILIBERT

That fellow by the king
Who hangs and fawns on him, shall pay for this.
He flouts me; that's not much, but this is more:
I see him fool my brother. Mark my hand,
I'll make him suffer more than Jacopo!

ANDREA

O joyous sight! May I be there!

PHILIBERT

You shall.

(*He advances to the king*) Pardon, dear brother. I
am all amaze;

My brain is crammed with surfeit of bright sounds
And all melodious visions; thus, I rave.

I am like one born blind, whose eyes flash wide,
Awakened sudden to a teeming earth;
Or one born deaf, whose ever-sealed ears
Open to concert of alternate choirs.

CLEMENTIA

If it shall please the prince—

PHILIBERT

Prince! There again,
Wonder of wonders! And you say the word,
First of all beings. I am prince indeed
If prince to you!

RENÉE

How if you're prince to me?

PHILIBERT

Brother, what are these beauties at your side,
Who teach mine eyes they never saw till now
What radiance was to see?

CONRAD

The prince speaks well:
This is the daughter of our chancellor,
Clementia, whose sweet mercy over us
Shines as the sun, without which none could live:—
Her cousin, Renée, queen of witchery.

PHILIBERT

(*To RENÉE*) You are like maiden Proserpine, whose
love
Drew rugged Dis from the dim realms of death;
Her at whose airy footstep flowers sprang,
Goddess of spring, of warm and beaming skies,
Light winds and happy brooks; but (*to CLEMENTIA*)
you, fair dame,
Are queen of the wide heaven.

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RENÉE

I am content.

Clementia may be a heavenly queen,
So I be ruler of the hearts of men.

CONRAD

Brother, they teach true wisdom in the woods:
I had not thought the beasts so courteous,
Or bird and bee so full of dainty words.

PHILIBERT

I learned these things from the old chronicles,
And ancient songs of wandering troubadours:
Now I shall copy you and learn apace.

CONRAD

Well said, and so thou shalt, and wilt do well.

PHILIBERT

(To CLEMENTIA) But, madam, we speak all before
our time.

You turned and called me *Prince*, but said not yet
What wished you of this prince whose life is yours.

CLEMENTIA

(Taking his hand) Only I was about to lead you here,
Where, turning from the bright and noisy room
And all these moving forms, your wearied eyes
Might rest upon the space of sky and sea.

*[She draws back the curtain, and they
look forth upon the moonlit sea.]*

What have I done? The colour leaves your cheek;
Your eyes are brimmed, your lips are quivering.

PHILIBERT

The sea! The sea!

CLEMENTIA

You saw it not till now?
Can you not speak?

PHILIBERT

Praise God, who made the sea!
Hark, how the undertone sounds on and on,
And all the lesser rush and call of it
Breaks with the foam upon the walls below.
Look where it melts into unfathomed night,

And there a wide light, like a path to heaven,
Runs shimmering below the silver moon.
Here is the world I knew in solemn dreams;
That is the cry of armies on the air,
The roar and struggle of impetuous life,
And underneath, the never-ceasing tone
Of the deep passion of the heart of man.
Above, the watchful heaven holds on high
Its bright and certain lights to guide our way.
My heart goes voyaging across the waste:
Surely I loved this thing through all my days.
What are the hillsides to this glorious change,
This restless beauty, that feeds all the soul
And lifts it up like wine? Give me your hand;
Certain I do not dream, for you are here,
A queen of dreams, and yet—a living hand!

CONRAD

(*Aside to RENÉE*) My rosebud of Artacia, how the
eyes
Of my poor brother dwelt upon your face!
Catch now this wild bird with your gentle lure,
And let us watch his struggles to be free.

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RENÉE

(*To* PHILIBERT) The king commands, sir, that
you walk with me.

PHILIBERT

My brother sends me into Paradise
Without the pain of death. Where shall I go?

CLEMENTIA

(*Aside to* ANDREA) My father will not ever speak
his mind;
What think you of this creature of the woods?

ANDREA

That I shall give my life to follow him.

CLEMENTIA

You do amaze me.

ANDREA

'Tis a fairy prince,
Nourished on wisdom in the solitudes.

The days that I have passed with him are all
I count of life well spent.

RENÉE

(*To PHILIBERT*) It is not hard.
I'll be your teacher in these idle things.

PHILIBERT

I shall obey you in all joyfulness.

CLEMENTIA

(*Aside to ANDREA*) He is beset by peril. See them
there,
Lord Luigi and my cousin and the king.

ANDREA

He hath one friend.

CLEMENTIA

Andrea, he hath two.

SCENE II

Morning in the great garden of the palace. Two lords conversing; JACOPO comes in walking on his hands.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Why do you this, Jacopo?

JACOPO

'Tis the style.

The world is upside down; this soon will be
The manner of our progress; I'll be first.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

What mean you, fool?

JACOPO

Know you, there's one at court
Who will not crook himself to wealth or power,
Who's careless of the strong, and tends the weak?

FIRST NOBLEMAN

I hear Prince Philibert makes many foes.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

What would you have? He lacks discretion;
Incontinently, too, he speaks the truth.
He's gentle, even tender, to this fool,
Who hates him, thinking it some curious mock.
He boldly chid a nobleman for oaths;
He held a beggar child the guard had pushed.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

The king, you say, doth love him more and more?

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Ah, yes; his majesty's benignity
Shines as he rescues and reproves the prince,
Who doth adore him.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Soon the king will tire;
The circling train of folly fills the heart
Where wisdom and where valour never come.

The King enters with PHILIBERT, LUIGI, and noblemen.

CONRAD

Brother, we must discuss this serious case.

(*To LUIGI*) He says he has no time to think and pray.

(*To PHILIBERT*) Now, you declare that I am very wise,

And yet, you see, I live thus happily.

No man that has a mind should ever think;

Let him but act—your thinkers only dream.

PHILIBERT

Dear brother, your swift mind so subtly works,

No doubt you think and act at once, but thus

You do mislead and puzzle slower folk.

I heard a man say only yesterday,

“If once the king would pause and think a space,

He would not let his nobles cheat the poor.”

CONRAD

Brother, you overpass your privilege!

Such words are treason to repeat or hear;
Who spoke them?

PHILIBERT

I shall not betray him, sire.
I answered him.

CONRAD

And prithee, how?

PHILIBERT

I said:

“You have mistaken much our honoured king;
He guards the people’s welfare as his own,
And if his nobles cheat, be very sure
He only waits to crush them utterly.”

[There is a stir among the nobles about the King.]

JACOPO

My lords, I have a present for the prince,
And a good offer, too, of livelihood.

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CONRAD

Speak to him, fool.

JACOPO

Here, take my bauble, sir;
I know my betters and give place to them.
You are a nonpareil; I yield you room.

CONRAD

Sirrah, this goes too far!

PHILIBERT

Thanks, Jacopo;
I think you far the wittier of us two.
I'm but the natural fool, the country-bred;
I could not please these people at the court.
Take back your bauble, and this golden ring;
And be the merrier that I am here
To share your duties.

CONRAD

You are over-kind:
A whip would be the better way to speak.

I think you do not know an insult, boy,
When you receive it.

PHILIBERT

From that feeble thing?
Poor soul, my heart has only pity there!
Here come the children peeping through the trees;
I promised them a song.

CONRAD

Let us proceed.
[The King and his train go out.]

JACOPO

I'll give you wisdom for your golden ring;
Hasten to seek your shelter in the woods
Before some gallant spits you like a goose,
And my lord Luigi turns you at the fire.

PHILIBERT

Peace, peace, poor fool! what have I done to thee?

JACOPO

Nothing to me; therefore I gird at you.

A wise man would have struck me long ago.

[He goes out.]

The children run forward, pull PHILIBERT down upon a marble bench, and clamber over him.

CHILDREN

Come, Philibert, you promised us a song.

FIRST CHILD

Let me sit nearest.

SECOND CHILD

He has pushed me off;

I was here first.

PHILIBERT

Let every one sit next,—
All over me, and Nino in my arms.

FIRST CHILD

Now sing the song you said you made for spring.

PHILIBERT

(Sings) *My nose is pressed against the pane
To watch the grass grow green.
The little leaves are bright with rain,
The sun glints in between.
Hoha! Hoha! The spring comes in,
The sun and rain their strife begin.*

*The mud is deep along the path
Where folk are plodding slow,
The teamster strikes his horse in wrath,
That pulls and strains to go.
Hoha! Hoha! The spring comes in,
The sun and rain their strife begin.*

*My lady dries her shining hair,
Bleaches her fair white gown;
The spattering drops fall everywhere.
Ah me, how dark her frown!
Hoha! Hoha! The spring comes in,
The sun and rain their strife begin.*

Join all hands round and dance the chorus through!

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ALL

*Hoha! Hoha! The spring comes in,
The sun and rain their strife begin.*

PHILIBERT

Scamper away; I see the ladies come.

[The children run off.]

CLEMENTIA and RENÉE come forward.

A CHILD

Nino shall stay with you. He will not go.

PHILIBERT

Nino must be a field-mouse, very quiet.

(To the ladies) The spring's in bloom: the green-
wood summons us!

I rose before the swallows had popped out
From their round holes along the old white wall;
I ran in the sweet valley, where new green
Tips every bush, and red anemones
And purple violets blink in the young grass.

CLEMENTIA

Sing to us, prince; we heard you singing here.

PHILIBERT

This is a song I made some few days since,
Meseems a life ago, a world away:
I wandered in the woods from dawn till eve,
From amber dawn till the pale moon arose,
And twice I wept because I had no love.

(Sings) *The world sings loud of love in May,
And scarlet through the sunny noon
The silken poppies bend and sway,
Red still beneath the moon.*

*The nightingale of love doth sing,
Trembling aspires his rapid strain,
Till, through the climbing echoes, ring
Three cries of clear disdain.*

*Of passion, and the pain thereof,
Helpless I sing in my distress,
That have a heart made all for love,
And dwell in loneliness.*

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RENÉE

This is too sad. I choose the children's song.

PHILIBERT

(*To RENEE*) No, 'tis a dance. Come, lady, come
and dance!

Dance like the mænads to their jangling brass,
When Bacchus halts his leopards in delight,
And to the wild brooks foaming on the rocks
They match the music of their laughing cries.

CLEMENTIA

You do not ask me, prince, to dance with you?

PHILIBERT

Madam, you are no mænad of the woods;
No sunset crimson flaming through the trees
Can light your madness, for the silver moon
Rather shall call you queen.

CLEMENTIA

I am too grave.

Act II

The Coming of Philibert

77

PHILIBERT

It cannot be that you are angry?

CLEMENTIA

No.

Will you not dance?

PHILIBERT

My feet have lost their wings.

CLEMENTIA

See, then, I'll smile. It is a well-known word
I am too grave for dancing. Cousin, go.

RENÉE

She plays at being queen before her time:
Not queen of heaven neither—

CLEMENTIA

Pray you, cease.

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RENÉE

We'll leave her to her dreams, my happy faun:
Haha, haha, how long you wear your curls,
Just fit for pulling!

PHILIBERT

Not so long as yours!

RENÉE

Dance, dance!

PHILIBERT

Well, sing it then; this is the air:

*Hoha! Hoho! The spring comes in;
The sun and rain their strife begin.*

*[They dance, pelting each other with
flowers and shaking the bushes.]*

RENÉE

It snows a rosy snow, the snow of spring!
Your feet are lead; you cannot catch me, prince.

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PHILIBERT

I will, though, soon. *[He chases her.]*

RENÉE

Hold, Philibert! The king!

CONRAD *enters*; PHILIBERT *runs up to him, laughing,*
and casts his arms about him.

PHILIBERT

We pulled your flowers; may we have some more?

CONRAD

You did not ask permission for the first.
I think you take the blossoms you desire,
And ask no leave at all from man or maid.
How's that, fair mistress?

RENÉE

No, sire, if you please:

All in this garden is the king's alone;
If he withholds, naught ever shall be given.

CONRAD

Blossoms, or hearts, or kisses?

80

RENÉE

All, the king's.

CONRAD

What loyal gardens!

PHILIBERT

What a royal lord
That gives his own, unasked!

CONRAD

Not all his own.

(To CLEMENTIA) Dear lady, do not scorn these
foolish folk;
Their brains and heels alike are light as air.

CLEMENTIA

I only envy them.

CONRAD

Ah, no, not so:
From your white throne you smile and let them pass.
[He takes a place beside her.
Brother, come here and sit against my knee.

And is it possible thy age and mine
In any wise approach? Look at these curls,
Wet with his racing; they're a school-boy's locks.
Look at his eyes; they are a baby's eyes.
Look at his mouth. Sweet Renée! Well, that smiles;
I think it has been fed!

PHILIBERT

You're wrong there, sire.

CONRAD

Have patience, brother; little maids are coy.

[CLEMENTIA and RENÉE wander down a path.]

Now, Philibert, let's speak more seriously:

I hear, you talk with soldiers in the camp;

You must remember that you are their prince.

PHILIBERT

I only am a man with other men.

Is a prince more but by a hoop of gold,

Gay clothes, and certain moneys, and a word?

A man's the thing God made most like Himself,

CONRAD

You will bring danger to us by such words.

PHILIBERT

That poet whose dear head rests by our shores
In everlasting sleep, sang of a day
When fear should leave this world, the happy child
Gambol unharmed with tigers. I shall pray
Unceasingly "O Love, thy kingdom come!"

CONRAD

Philibert, you grow tedious as a clerk.

[He goes out.]

PIETRO *enters, capering.*

PIETRO

Well, Philibert, no forest more for me!
I wish Maria saw me in these clothes;
Her hands would never dare to reach my ears.
There's a girl here, says I am honester
Than any man at court; she's pretty, too.

Act II

The Coming of Philibert

83

PHILIBERT

Go to, she's fooling you.

PIETRO

Look to yourself,
For lady Renée makes a fool of you!

PHILIBERT

(*Cuffing him*) Your clothes will never keep me
from your ears!
Get in, young malapert!

PIETRO

(*Mocking*) I spoke the truth.
[*He goes.*]

PHILIBERT

Poor Nino is asleep on the hard ground.

[*He takes the child in his arms and scats himself upon the bench; he falls asleep. RENÉE and CLEMENTIA return through the garden, followed by JACOPO, unseen.*]

CLEMENTIA

Lo, here Endymion lies.

RENÉE

And Cynthia comes.

CLEMENTIA

How sound he sleeps! His lips are like a child's.

[She draws away, as RENÉE tries to restrain her, and kisses PHILIBERT on the cheek.]

RENÉE

You call me bold—but never yet so bold!

CLEMENTIA

Hush, cousin! He had no payment for his song.

RENÉE

And took this gift unknowing.

CLEMENTIA

Soft—away!

[They hurry out.]

LUIGI *and the King enter.*

LUIGI

Dear lord, your brother never will be man
Until he loves and drinks like other men.
Let's have a banquet, and beguile him there,
Set him beside Renée, and fill his cup:
'Twould be rare sport to see this priestly boy
Go mad with love. Let me seek out a wine.

CONRAD

He should know more of life, Luigi, 'tis true:
It would be wiser he should see and learn
Here, where my hand can guide him, than afar.

LUIGI

Oh, what a heart beats in your breast, my lord;
What wisdom circles you!

CONRAD

We'll teach the lad.

[CONRAD goes.]

JACOPO *comes forward.*

LUIGI

There's many crooked things are worth much gold,
And crooked keys unlock our doors. Come here.
What went this way just now?

JACOPO

The spring, that fades,
The sun, declined past noonday, and the king.

LUIGI

If you are wise, you will be friends with me;
Our cause is one.

JACOPO

My cause indeed is one;
I serve myself.

LUIGI

And so does every man.
Look at this sapling thrusting from its path
The weaker growths: so shall I thrust aside

All creatures else; the king shall be mine own,
And thou canst warm thy wits beside my hearth,
Or shiver in the cold outside my door.
This boy's too simple for thy jests or mine;
Lady Clementia sorts not with us.
Some plants cannot survive within one plot,
Each for the other poisons earth and air;
So are these twain to us.

JACOPO

Lady Renée?

LUIGI

She stands with us; they are her death as well.

JACOPO

Lady Clementia was here but now,
And lovingly she kissed the prince.

LUIGI

Here's gold.

Tell none of this, and I will root them out
From Conrad's heart, to flourish there alone.

88

How still he lies! What if we slew him now,
And dragged the corse down to the sea?

JACOPO

No, no!

'Twould be discovered!

LUIGI

Let him sleep awhile;
Soon shall he sleep indeed, nor ever wake.
[*They go out, leaving PHILIBERT asleep.*]

SCENE III

Evening. A corridor adjoining the banquet-hall of the palace.

GIORDANO CARACCIOLI *enters, and from the other side* ANDREA.

GIORDANO

An instant, sir. Are you the lord Andrea
Who to Castel del Monte lately came
To seek Prince Philibert?

Act II

The Coming of Philibert

89

ANDREA

And you, sir, are
His guardian of the woods.

GIORDANO

I pray you, sir,
How doth the lad?

ANDREA

Just now he dines within.

GIORDANO

You put me off and do not speak your thought;
I see your eyes askance, your manner grave.

ANDREA

You are his friend. I fear for him to-night.
Enter and watch. They ply him fast with wine,
And at his side Renée, who loves the king,
Set on by him to tease and pet the prince,
Twines roses in his hair, kisses his cup,
Leans on his shoulder, laughs into his eyes,

And does a thousand nameless, subtle things,
The while his brow grows flushed, his accents wild.
Go in, go in, and see. What can I do?

RENÉE *enters, followed by* PHILIBERT.

RENÉE

Nay, let me pass, my lord; enough, enough!

PHILIBERT

I am no tiger, Chloe, most sweet fawn!
There! there! One kiss, you tempted me; one more.
Nay, do not struggle so; you hurt your arms,
These soft sweet arms! Come, loveliest, away!

RENÉE

Prince Philibert! O Conrad, he is mad!
Help, for his eyes are wild!

GIORDANO

Prince Philibert!
Loose her: this is my daughter that you hold!

Act II

The Coming of Philibert

91

RENÉE

Oh, help me, sirs!

PHILIBERT

My master! Here? Why here?

GIORDANO

Child, you are safe and in your father's arms.
Take her, Andrea; for I have some words
Yet for this gentleman.

RENÉE

Back to my rooms!

[She goes out with ANDREA.]

GIORDANO

Now break, my heart! O eyes that saw this sight,
Be blind forever, weep yourselves away!
My pearl, that I did cast before these swine,
Which they have broken in their trampled mire,
Fouled, shattered, and destroyed by their cleft feet,
That trample now on my old life as well,
And their tusks rend my heart! Oh, hadst thou died!

Would that my hands had crushed out life in thee
Ere thou hadst soiled thy soul!

PHILIBERT

Is there no hope?

No mercy for me now?

GIORDANO

Come home with me,
And spend thy life in penitence and prayer.

PHILIBERT

I cannot go. I—do not—wish—to go.

GIORDANO

The castle of my dreams is sunk to earth,
And lava streams have flowed across its walls.

[*He goes out.*]

CLEMENTIA *enters from the banquet-hall.*

CLEMENTIA

Kneel not! You should lie prone, and thrust your
face
Deep in the dust! Was it no harm to me

To take the sparkle from my risen sun,
And freshness from the dawn, and joy from earth?
I saw you, and I thought one man divine.
My world is overhung because of you,
And life is horrible because of you:
Never again shall I be merry—no—
Nor eager any more. I trusted you:
You, you, of all men living, did I trust.
I have seen baseness and abhorred things,
And yet I hoped for better, until now. [*She goes out.*]

JACOPO *enters.*

JACOPO

You never take a shoal, but jump mid-sea:
Why must you drown, a-learning how to swim?

PHILIBERT

All hail, and welcome in the nick of time!
By folly came I here, by folly go.
Hold here my sword, till I shall cast myself
Up to the hilt upon it. Grasp it firm;
I shall not miss like poor Mark Antony.

JACOPO

Oh, let me go, an you be merciful.
I shall be killed; they'll say I murdered you!
Lord, how you stare and shout!

PHILIBERT

Look at this arm,
You puny thing—no creature but would think
You did as I had bid you. Take the sword;
Here's gold—have courage but an instant.
[He forces JACOPO to hold the sword.]

JACOPO

Help!

Andrea, lord Andrea!

ANDREA

(Entering) Well, what now?
O horror! Philibert! My lord! My friend!

PHILIBERT

Nay, if thou be my friend, help me to die.
I am dishonoured, and I cannot live.

ANDREA

Kill, then, Luigi, rather, and not yourself,
Not your poor body maddened by his arts:
You do not know that wine. Ah, dear my prince,
Be comforted. I'll slay him presently.

The King enters with LUIGI and nobles.

PHILIBERT

My brother,—fallen thus prostrate at your feet,
I beg you to forgive me that I still
Call you my brother,—I, too vile a thing
To call myself a man,—oh, let me die!
This brace of fools have balked me of my will,
But you, my brother, you will let me die!

CONRAD

Why, child, why, Philibert! Look up, dear lad!
Luigi, 'twas basely done, 'twas foully done!
Thou hast been injured, brother. Come aside;
Lean on my heart; poor lad, beloved boy!
See how he weeps as he would tear his breast!
I swear to thee, who am thy king and lord,

Thou hast done nothing ill: a little wine,
What's that? A pretty face; all men are so!
Take heart! Luigi has had a jest of thee!

PHILIBERT

Ah, so? Then where's my sword?

JACOPO

Here—luck to both!

ANDREA

I am the better fencer, Philibert;
Pray you, let me—

PHILIBERT

(*To LUIGI*) Come out, vile spawn of hell.
Take up your sword, or I will drag your heart
Forth from your breast to show how foul it is.
Leave the king's bosom, viper, till I cast
You prone upon your belly in the dust,
Where you shall crawl for men to stamp upon!

CONRAD

Some poison works a madness in his veins!

PHILIBERT

Needs there a buffeting to make you fight?

LUIGI

Sire, he has said he sought his death, and now
What comes is not my fault.

CONRAD

Brother, forbear!

PHILIBERT

Forbid me not, for I will fight this man.

ANDREA

He is more skillful—Philibert—

PHILIBERT

Stand back.

My nerves are iron; you need not fear for me.

[They fight: LUIGI fences the more skillfully, but PHILIBERT beats down his guard.]

LUIGI

He strikes me down: his arm's a blacksmith's arm.
Save me! He'll have my life! He does not fence!

PHILIBERT

Not when I beat a cur.

CONRAD

Brother, enough!

[PHILIBERT *does not heed him.*

Seize on the prince; for certain, he is mad.

[*Several nobles start forward, but hesitate to approach PHILIBERT.*

PHILIBERT

Who comes, shall step within his open grave.

CONRAD

Your brother doth entreat, your king command,
That you will spare his friend.

PHILIBERT

O Conrad, Conrad!

You beg your hurt; this thing is poisonous
And should not live beside you. Let him go,
Since you must have it so. Snake, crawl away,
And meditate the means to sting again.

CLEMENTIA *and* RENÉE *enter.*

RENÉE

You are too bitter.

CLEMENTIA

Then it was thy fault.

RENÉE

What have I done?

CLEMENTIA

His heart is clean, to thine.

It is a pity such a futile thing

As thou hast power to harm him; a wee stone,

Treacherous, slipping, underneath his heel.

ANDREA

(*To* CLEMENTIA) Lady, the prince is mad with
grief and shame,

And would have cast away his life but now.

CLEMENTIA

(*To* PHILIBERT) There is another baptism than
salt tears

That can wash clear thy soul; another way

Than the slow path of solitary prayer.
Lose thy life where the loss is all men's gain;
Give it to serve thy country at her need.
Behold Artacia, a stag at bay,
Beset by yelping hounds, that snap and spring,—
The Frank, the Spaniard, and the Saracen,
German, and Greek. Take up your sword and go!

PHILIBERT

You give me life again. Conrad, I'll go!

CONRAD

None here will question whether you can fight—
Surely 'twere safer if you slew our foes.
Take my command and go, dear Philibert,
And on your eagles may bright Fortune beam!

ANDREA

I'll go with thee, and shield thy life with mine.

ACT III

SCENE I

The great garden of the palace. It is afternoon, as the scene proceeds it draws toward sunset, and at length the moon rises. A sound of bells is heard from the city, and then the shouting of a multitude.

ANDREA *and a nobleman talking in the garden.*

ANDREA

Hark, where the white bell-tower above the square
Speaks with the tongue King Manfred gave to it!
And now a great shout shudders on the air,
Flying thus far, like the echo of a storm.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Prince Philibert passes that way, to church,
To hear the masses for his victories,
And all men clamour till they shake the walls.

ANDREA

He's not admired alone for bloody fields
Where his wide-gathered armies, sundering
The embattled host, rode like a tide at flood;
Not honoured only for far-seeing strength
And wisdom whence all nations gather good,
But for the man he is: he seems to glow,
A vivid fire of love that pulses warm,
Enkindling, round about, the running flame.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

I think he would be glad to take the hand,
And know the heart, and labour in the life,
Of every soul on earth; his eager mind
Enters in every cranny of men's lives,
And comes to succour and to understand.

ANDREA

We sail on Wednesday for the eastern shore;
The prince is strangely restless to depart.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Why should that idle barrier of chance
Withhold us now from calling him our king?

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

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ANDREA

'Tis boldly said. Give me your hand on it.
An hour hence the Artacian nobles meet,
All worthy of that honourable name,
Here, to put off the hated servitude
To Conrad, and hail Philibert their king.
They come to conference now; pause yet a space.

Enter NICCOLÒ CARACCIOLI and other nobles.

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Enough of injuries, enough of wrongs,
Enough of the slow malady we bear,
Like ailing children of enfeebled minds
That cannot rise and strive against their woes:
Lovely Artacia, like a fertile field,
Wasted in drouth,—parched, faded, and forlorn,
Until these victories, a plenteous rain,
Beckoned again the green and living spring.

THIRD NOBLEMAN

We are resolved, and Philibert must reign;
Whenas he comes from church we'll meet him here.
Lord Caraccioli, we await your word.

104

NICCOLÒ

Wait still, my lords; pluck not green fruit in May.
From me, as yet, is silence; we must wait;
Silence to you, and silence to the king.
Fear not, nor hope.

ANDREA

We shall not wait for you.
[They go out conversing.]

CLEMENTIA and RENÉE enter.

CLEMENTIA

How softly evening comes across the sea;
The circle of the trembling, azure bay
Holds yet the light, though here beneath the trees
The scented gloom grows cool. The olives blow
In misty silver; now the wind is here,
And all the branches lift. Across the waves,
See where the breeze has stroked them, like a hand
Roughening smooth shining fleece.

RENÉE

The wind is chill.

CLEMENTIA

The sweet air soothes my thought; some radiant
thing

Seems drawing near across that gilded sea,
Born of the night, and love. Dear heart, go in,
And let me dream, that have not leave to live.

RENÉE

I have not hope enough to dream.

CLEMENTIA

Yet stay:

Tell me, sweet cousin, must it ever be
That women should not think, nor will, nor act,
But sit and see their happiness go by,
And perish so without the thing they choose?

RENÉE

Clementia, I have no clever words;
I only know I suffer: that is all.

CLEMENTIA

Should we not ever go to meet our fate?
Can love be thus obedient and thus tame?

How could one love, who waited thus on time?
 I cannot think but it is worthier
 To start from the still place where maidens stand
 Down-drooped like flowers, to turn, and seize the gift
 From the lax hand of the uncaring fates.

RENÉE

Well if the gift be there, but bitter ill
 To snatch an empty hand.

The King comes toward them.

CONRAD

Fair ladies, hail!
 Clementia, may I entreat of you
 Some speech apart? Your cousin is excused.

[RENEE *retires.*

Lady, our saints have told us how in prayer
 Voices and visions broke on their rapt sense,
 Bringing celestial counsels: so to me,
 That am no saint indeed, but yet a king,
 Kneeling just now within the sacred walls,

A whisper came, "Delay no moment more;
Gather the golden rose."

CLEMENTIA

Most honoured king,
You grow a poet, and my simple mind
Creeps far below your soaring.

CONRAD

Once in life
Love makes each man a poet. Turn your face,
And let me see the light within your eyes
Kindle from mine.

CLEMENTIA

Pray you release me, sire!

CONRAD

Tremble not, dear Clementia; your crown
Shall be no heavier than violets.
Tell me, you knew from childhood of this hour?
I set my daisy-wreaths on your frank brow
Among the clustered curls of eight-years-old.
You always knew.

108

CLEMENTIA

How could I know, my lord?
You have loved many.

CONRAD

I have loved but one.
I've smiled and toyed with beauties here and there.

CLEMENTIA

And let them love you. Ah, choose one of them
Whose praise will steep the air in honeyed balm.
I am not fit to be a gracious queen;
I am too hasty, I love not the court;
Dreaming I pass among the stately throng,
And stifle for the woods and liberty.

CONRAD

Clementia, what fear hath shaken you?
Some fancy of your own unworthiness,
That shall not longer last than the bright day
Which makes you wife and queen?

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

109

CLEMENTIA

Say not those words!

Beseech your pardon: I must speak the truth,
Though it sound strange and harsh within your ears,
So all unused to truth.

CONRAD

Not so, fair dame;
I am a king that never suffered lies.

CLEMENTIA

Believe me that I cannot be your queen.

CONRAD

Your father's rank is less than royalty,
But I shall raise you unto me by love.

CLEMENTIA

Sire, lay aside the falseness of your state,
And be a man: this instant, first in life.

CONRAD

What hath bewildered you? Start not away;
Fear not; I shall be patient of your whim.

CLEMENTIA

Alas! how shall I speak? To me you stand
This instant only man, no king at all.
For when a king, how great soever he be,
Asks of a woman for the boon you crave,
He is the suppliant, and she the lord.

CONRAD

That strikes no terror to my constant heart.
I lay the king aside. My year-long love,
Clementia, shall claim you as a bride.
Am I not worthy of you as a man?

CLEMENTIA

Worthy you may be, but I love you not.

[Goes swiftly.]

CONRAD

What did she say? Methinks I have not heard.
Why hath she fled? A madness came on her.

LUIGI *approaches.*

LUIGI

What troubles you, my lord?

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

III

CONRAD

Amaze, amaze!

You shall not credit me. What wonder's here?
Lady Clementia, whom, the world doth know,
I purpose for my queen,—and she hath known,
Hath watched for this, since childhood,—'tis not
true!

She must be ill; or I have much mistook
The wild and wandering words she spoke to me;
Then—ere she fled—Luigi, it is not true!
Why, it is past all reason, past man's thought,
Past the imagination to conceive—

LUIGI

Past mine, until you tell me, dear my lord.

CONRAD

I cannot find a word to utter it,
No syllable to fit, no sense to frame
The marvel. She might be the Artacian queen,
And it would seem she hath refused the crown,
And me—and me. Ah, Luigi, am I mad?

Surely you do not smile? My eyes mistook!

[*A pause.*]

Clementia hath told you otherwise:

This is a trick, a jest, 'twixt you and her,
To prove my love.

LUIGI.

Alas! it is no jest.

CONRAD

No jest? And yet no wonder?

LUIGI

Not to me.

CONRAD

No wonder? Speak! What mean you? There
again!

Why do you smile and turn your face aside?

LUIGI

Let me depart. I am a wretched soul
That loves you and will come to punishment
For that same love, which sees and cannot speak:—

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

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CONRAD

Speak, I command you!

LUIGI

—like a soothsayer

That reads unwelcome portents in the stars
And is thenceforward hateful. Sweet my king,
The day dawns when poor Luigi shall be dear;
For time, that tries men's faith, shall prove his heart,
And leave him lonely, smitten, dead perhaps,
Yet true to you, alone of all men, true.

CONRAD

What dost thou hint? Some treason?

LUIGI

Where to turn!

You'd call me base, self-seeking, jealous even,
If I should utter truth. Clementia
Has long forsaken loyalty and faith,
For sure she was betrothed, by the consent,
If not of words, of conduct, many years—
She loves another man.

114

CONRAD

Impossible!

LUIGI

I grant you, mad, but not impossible.

CONRAD.

Show me the man.

LUIGI

It is your brother, sire.

CONRAD

I'll not believe it! Proof—let me have proof,
Or it goes ill with thee!

LUIGI

See, there it is;

You hate me now.

CONRAD

No, no! But give me proof.

LUIGI

Her eyes, that seek for him in every place,
Her ears, that only harken for his voice,

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

115

Her steps, that turn her unto him, and sway
Even all her beauteous self from head to heel:—
All drawn to him, by magic, where he moves.

CONRAD

Fancy, all fancy! Tell me something more.

LUIGI

You force me then? Jacopo, six months past,
Walked in this garden, where your brother slept
After some rollicking. Clementia came,
Stooped over him with eyes, like April heavens,
Scattering at once swift fire and tender rain;
She kissed him on the lips, and fled away.

CONRAD

Pah! Hath she fallen so low? He shall not live.
Look, Luigi, look, and am I yet a king?
Are there no armies marching at my word;
No throne, no sceptre yet within my grasp;
No proud imperial purple, nor no crown?
Where's that swift-working charm of look and smile,
The vaunted domination of my glance?

Am I not worthy of her as a man,
Mere man, that sighs, and loves, and would be loved?
Is there no grace of mind nor wit in me?

LUIGI

Dear lord, you rave; what frenzy is this talk?
You know you are the noblest man alive.

CONRAD

No, no. I am the poorest clod alive.
Let me go out and tear my velvet cloak,
Smear my smooth cheeks with mud, and by my gate
Beg for some charity.

LUIGI

My king—my life—

CONRAD

She thinks I take it smoothly, I, her lord;
She thinks I crouch a spaniel to her lash;
The girl is wrecked by praise of her fair face.
She'll beg me yet for kindness. These are tears!
I had not thought a girl could make me weep.
I have not wept before, since on that day

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

117

When Michael died to save my favourite horse,
And kissed my hand in dying—this poor hand,
That is not suffered to bestow a crown.

LUIGI

The time is ripe for many a hideous birth;
There is much mischief in these pregnant days.
I could say more—

CONRAD

I pray thee, spare me not;
Nothing can touch me now with any woe.

LUIGI

Not if your throne were threatened?

CONRAD

What, my throne?

LUIGI

Yes, even so. There is much talk about,
That Philibert will wrest away your crown.
He hath a following; you saw to-day.

118

CONRAD

The forest viper, warmed against my breast,
Where is a stone to crush his venomed head?

LUIGI

He's like a plague that spreads contagion:
The people sicken, and the army fails,
And now this lady, who should be your queen.

CONRAD

When I shall amputate the source of ill
They will recover of infirmity.
I shall be merciful, even unto her.
When the bound traitors tremble by my throne
Some I shall spare; and when she creeps to me,
I'll raise her then and set her at my side.
Devise a remedy; let it be swift.

LUIGI

It must be swift. Each moment that he lives
Is greater peril. (*A pause*) Let him come to-night
Unto the Eagle's Eyrie; and I'll send

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

119

Some fellows of the town, base, wretched things
Eager to murder for a piece of gold.

CONRAD

I will not have a shadow of the blame
Rest ever on me for my brother's death.
You must contrive a way.

LUIGI

Trust me for that.

You shall be there in crown and ermine cloak,
And you may threaten them, and fight for him,
Unharm'd by them: I'll school them to their task,
Dipping their blades in some insidious brew,
That, though they slightly wound him, shall destroy
Even at a touch.

CONRAD

Your thoughts are horrible!
Could we not send him to the woods once more?

LUIGI

The world would seek him—and Clementia.
There's but one place where such as he are hid.

I 20

CONRAD

And that?

LUIGI

The grave, which holds them silently.

CONRAD

I do not comprehend the things I say—
Something has broken somewhere in my brain.
Tell me, it is not true? All—all—this hour—
Luigi, come in, for I must rest awhile;
There is a mist across my eyes—my mind.
Where is your arm? You love me—do you not?

[*They go.*]

NICCOLÒ CARACCIOLI *appears, walking down a path,*
overtaken by CLEMENTIA.

NICCOLÒ

Clementia, why is it you are sad?
I fear your royal lover, as great kings
Not seldom are, is careless of his vows.

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

121

CLEMENTIA

Alas, how shall I grieve you when I say
That your long-cherished hopes are faded buds
Which shall not ever bloom!

NICCOLÒ

What dost thou mean?

Answer me, child.

CLEMENTIA

I shall not wed the king.

NICCOLÒ

So, so, he hath disdained thee at the last!
'Tis like him, too. He is not worth thy tears.
I shall not weep.

CLEMENTIA

Then I will smile again.

NICCOLÒ

Is not the prince the nobler gentleman?

CLEMENTIA

I know you are my father, for your heart
Has read the heart you made.

122

NICCOLÒ

What's this, my girl?

I will hear more anon. Your eyes are keen.

Poor Conrad, he would never be advised.

[CLEMENTIA goes.]

ANDREA *and the nobles enter and join* NICCOLÒ.

NICCOLÒ

Friends, I am yours. Artacia hath won.

OLD NOBLEMAN

'Tis very commendable of you, sir,

To cast aside your hopes and join with us.

[*A sound of shouting draws near. Followed by a throng of soldiers and citizens, PHILIBERT enters, in silver armour, bearing a standard.*]

PHILIBERT

(*Dismissing the crowd*) What means this fair assembly?

NICCOLÒ

Honoured prince,

It means that the great words sung in your praise

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

123

Are prologue to the greater things to come,
Deeds: that shall so enlarge those swelling words
That all Artacia shall that drama hear,
From distant hills tossed white against the blue,
Across the furrowed azure of the sea,
To where Enceladus, in groaning sleep,
Casts up his fiery breath.

PHILIBERT

No praises more.
Fitley to God we rendered our due thanks,
But spare thanks to His servant.

NICCOLÒ

Yet hear on.

PHILIBERT

I shall obey you, sir, unwillingly.

FIRST NOBLEMAN

Then let us swiftly to the core of the thing.
Conrad hath used us ill, Artacia ill,
Nay, all humanity is shamed in him,
And we have chosen you to be our king.

PHILIBERT

(*To NICCOLÒ*) You, that crowned Conrad monarch,
answer him.

SEVERAL NOBLEMEN

We tender you allegiance on our knees:
Long live King Philibert!

NICCOLÒ

Take up your crown:
The soldiers are your own, the common folk,
And we, the nobles of Artacia.

ANDREA

Great prince, this nation shall rejoice and sing
Under your rule.

PHILIBERT

Andrea! not my friend?
You have befouled that name.

SEVERAL NOBLEMEN

What answer, prince?

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The Coming of Philibert

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PHILIBERT

That I am no such traitor as yourselves.
What would you do with Conrad?

FIRST NOBLEMAN

He must die.

PHILIBERT

O race of wolves, it is impossible
That ye could think I'd steal away the throne
From the anointed king, and mount that throne
My hands yet reeking with my brother's blood—
My brother's, whom God gave into my breast
To cherish and to honour while I live?
Sure, some strange frenzy doth possess your souls!
(*To NICCOLÒ*) And you, sir, you, set in his father's
place,
Bound now by closer ties— Shame on you all!

SECOND NOBLEMAN

Nay, now, Prince Philibert, you do us wrong.
You're very young, you cannot see the whole.
The king is wasteful, cowardly, and false;

He doth neglect his duties, spends his days
In revellings and follies.

PHILIBERT

Yet you say
That I am young: he is as young as I.
What man of you hath told him of his faults
And asked him to amend? Who was his guide?
You, Niccolò, that blame him. Go to him,
Show him severely, then, the wrong he does:
He hath to-day that wit you praised him for
But yesterday, my lords—that agile brain,
That marvellous mind, those noble, courtly ways,
I've heard you sing to surfeit, yet with truth.
And as for me, you'll have my services
Or in the council or the tented field;
Always my life is for Artacia,
And I will toil, close at my brother's side.

NICCOLÒ

We must disperse, my lords.

PHILIBERT

I'd thank you, sirs,
For the great honour done me, if my mind

Could turn from horror at the means you chose.
I conjure you in my dead father's name,—
Some were his friends, and all of you his heirs,—
That ye forsake not now Artacia,
Which he hath given you. This was his dread—
A civil strife; for that he banished me.

OLD NOBLEMAN

That old fanatic hermit in the woods
Hath spoiled a man in thee. This is his work.
I knew him well of old, and flouted him.
He could not live on earth—no more can you.

PHILIBERT

Rescue the king! Thus shall Artacia
From this hard shell, that seemed a marring stone,
Draw forth a seed of good. Andrea, come.

[All go out but ANDREA and PHILIBERT.]

A vaster world is hidden in this our world.
How should it be if these concealed thoughts,
Now hived within us, came to sudden sight,
Peopling the vacant air—the ministers
And masters of our fate, hemming us round?

Then should a company of two or four
Be swollen to a stirring multitude,
As in those tiny rooms set round with glass,
Where the strange postures of the thing we see
Come vaguely home to us, bespeak our selves;
What starts of horror, quaking wonderment,
When there, beside the friend whose arm we held,
Grimaced the apish slander of his brain;
While near the brow of silent honesty
A laureate angel sang harmonious!
And how should shamefast love rejoice to see
Delicate beauties speeding from his heart
To shower the adored with raining flowers!
I thrust aside necessity with words,
Yet I must speak. Sir, you have been my choice;
To me the stateliest tree, the strongest tower,
My bulwark and my dwelling: I'm bereft;
This wind of treason fells you, leaves me chill.

ANDREA

You are mistaken when you gird at me.
It would advantage us to slay the king;
There's not another remedy can serve.

PHILIBERT

You do insult my ears; you know him not.

ANDREA

Alas! too well.

PHILIBERT

Stand off and hear my words,
For though they scar the lips that utter them,
Yet shall I speak. Thy deed doth merit death.
Think not 'twas kind to me: I say 'twas base;
Evil to me and treason to the state.
Can he be friend at all, whose loyalty
Hath suffered such a stain, or faithful here
When there he hath been false, or honoured here
When there dishonoured?

ANDREA

Then, sir, let me die,
If I have lost your friendship; let me die.

PHILIBERT

You have not said to me: *Thrice on the field
I fenced your life with mine, took home the wound*

*That sought for you, cast myself in the breach
Of imminent danger, shared my food with you,
Slept with your head low-pillowed on my breast,
And stirred, to shield your body from the storm.*

ANDREA

Why, now that you are cruel, I must go;
I cannot suffer this. Your brother's axe
To this, is merciful.

PHILIBERT

Andrea, stay.

ANDREA

You said, *not honoured here*, and *false of heart*.

PHILIBERT

No, no, not *false of heart*.

ANDREA

I think you did.

PHILIBERT

You have repented you of this day's work?

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ANDREA

No, not a whit, my lord, nor ever shall.

PHILIBERT

How can I have a traitor for my friend?

ANDREA

You cannot, sir, and I must part from you.

[He goes away: PHILIBERT sinks upon the bench and stares at the ground.]

JACOPO *comes in.*

JACOPO

Prince Philibert! My lord!

PHILIBERT

What did you say?

JACOPO

Prince Paradox! Your day of victory
Gives you a face to fit a day of loss.

PHILIBERT

It is, it is, loss irretrievable!

132

JACOPO

Lady Renée hath sent me for you, sir.

PHILIBERT

Where shall I find her?

JACOPO

Here, an you will wait.

If you have kindness, give it unto her.

Why should the wind of sorrow rend a rose,

And spare this withered brier? Here's something
wrong,

That destiny should shatter loveliness,

And leave the crooked sticks to clog our ways.

PHILIBERT

Poor Jacopo! You love this lady?

JACOPO

Yes;

Her only upon earth: I hate the rest.

[JACOPO *retires.*

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RENÉE *comes in.*

PHILIBERT

Madam, you sent for me.

RENÉE

Alas the day!

Once thou didst come unsummoned; let it pass:
Now I am here, I know not what to do.

PHILIBERT

Tell me if I may serve you.

RENÉE

That's the thing,
Serve me. My father pleaded with me once
To come to him: you can point out the way;
I'll warm my cold even at an ash-strewn fire.

PHILIBERT

His heart is young with love, and will be so
Till death shall take him to the realms of love.

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RENÉE

I know I am not good enough for him,
Yet must I go, for no one in this place
Cares if I go. Your brother will rejoice.

PHILIBERT

Nay, wherefore do you weep?

RENÉE

Prince Philibert,
Why is it shame to give a love unsought?
Is it not noble to give anything
Freely, without the hope of a return?
Why then a shame to give the greatest gift?

PHILIBERT

If this be shame, then am I shameful too!

RENÉE

What?

PHILIBERT

Ah, my tongue has run beyond my will
Through sympathy. Pray you, forget my words.

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RENÉE

You love Clementia? You do not speak.

PHILIBERT

Why is the colour flashing to your face?

RENÉE

My life returns; I cannot kill my hope;
As a child's hands cling to a wished-for toy
And, loosed an hundred times, fly swiftly back
To clutch it to its breast, so my desire
Catches again at hope. You have mistook;
You do not share with me that splendid shame.

PHILIBERT

I understand you not.

RENÉE

Here, on this bench,
One day, you fell asleep. We did return,
Clementia and I, and she bent down
Smiling, and kissed you, with a face all love.

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Tears fell along her lashes, and her lips
Trembled against your cheek.

PHILIBERT

It cannot be!
Why have you said this thing that is not true?

RENÉE

Question herself: she will not flinch at it,
Or I mistake her heart.

PHILIBERT

My brother's bride!
Love from his dungeon in my careful breast
Hath cried to her in language of his own,
Unheard by any ear less fine than love's.
It cannot be she loves as I love her,
That were too terrible! She liked my song,
I called her Cynthia, she saw me sleep,
A boy to her, in my dull ignorance,
Whom for a jest she called Endymion.
She did not love me.

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RENÉE

Ask herself of that.

PHILIBERT

That shall I not, but hasten to my tents.
I'd let my life-blood run before I'd be
Barrier unto my brother's happiness.

RENÉE

You shall not go and leave her here to die;
For die she will, she does not love the king.
Stare not so hard, nor press against my wrist;
I tell you truth, she does not love the king.
But he will wed her now, against her will.

PHILIBERT

If there were but a single path of right,
And all ways else iniquitous, how swift
We'd tread it, though through thorns of agony:
But life is like a vast, untravelled wood,
Seeming to open into sun-flecked roads,
That close in tangled gloom. What shall I do?

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RENÉE

Draw hastily your sword, and cut your way
Through the dense thicket to your lady's bower,
And bear her forth with you. Love justifies;
Who sins against him, sins the only sin
Nor men nor gods can pardon.

PHILIBERT

Give my soul,
Fettered, into the keeping of my heart?
There's more in us than feeling. I must think.

[RENÉE runs out, returning at once
with CLEMENTIA, then goes.]

CLEMENTIA

Prince Philibert.

PHILIBERT

I pray you, pardon me.

CLEMENTIA

Do not depart.

PHILIBERT

Madam, if we must speak,
Go to some lighted room, where we can set
The glare between our souls.

CLEMENTIA

No; truth is here.
The night and the wide silence call for truth.

PHILIBERT

Lady, you know each atom of this frame
Cries out to come to you.

CLEMENTIA

You tremble, sir.
Last night when every minstrel sang of me
You would not sing nor praise me, yet I saw
Your kindling eye and knew you had a thought.
To what would you compare me? Tell me now.

PHILIBERT

You are like music heard at evenfall,
When the slow moon floats up the silvered sky;

Music that breathes above the shadowed earth
To voice immortal hopes, and stainless loves,
That lift us to undying destinies.

*[A sound of distant singing draws nearer. CLE-
MENTIA approaches him; their hands touch.
Who sing without?*

CLEMENTIA

The peasants coming down
From Mary's shrine. They sing the favourite song
Of this year's *festa*, called *Lost Happiness*.

*[She echoes the song softly.
The rosy clouds fade in the twilight cold,
Shadows come stealthily,
Silvery melting mists my vision fold,
Till, drawn of dreams, that face I do behold
Mine eyes shall never see.
While in the evening breeze the branches move,
Whispering like the rain,
My lonely, listless feet pause as they rove.
Harkening, I cheat me with the voice of love
That shall not speak again.*

[She pauses and draws away her hand.

Help me! A fear has come upon my soul;
A terror overpowering like the wind
That beats me breathless. You are strong and wise;
A man, and mighty. What is this I fear?
A mastery has fallen upon us both:
We seek each other out in every crowd,
Not moving, but with eyes; or, not with eyes,
But by some stirring in the pulse of life.
Why is this so? It has come suddenly.
A little while ago I was not bound;
I could think freely and not think of you.
My voice cries out alone. You bow your head
And do not answer. Do you know this thing?

PHILIBERT

I know I love you.

CLEMENTIA

Are you very sure?

PHILIBERT

I am so far unworthy of your love—

CLEMENTIA

Oh, are you sure you love me?

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PHILIBERT

Very sure.

But can I bless your life and make you glad?
Can you be happy with the man I am?

CLEMENTIA

You are my world. Bow down your precious head;
How I have yearned to hold it thus, your hair
Against my cheek, and your great gentle hand
Here on my shoulder! Let me kiss your hand.

PHILIBERT

Did I not love you long before I knew?

CLEMENTIA

The night draws near, and closes on our love
In benediction, takes us to the heart
Of all-enfolding nature. Philibert—

PHILIBERT

My heart is over-full.

CLEMENTIA

You move away.

PHILIBERT

Only to take you thus against my breast
And feel within my arms the whole of you.

CLEMENTIA

Your tears fall on my face like heavy rain.

PHILIBERT

I cannot speak: my life is turned to praise;
It mounts like silent flame that leaps to God
And praises Him in light.

CLEMENTIA

Come home to earth,
An instant home, while I shall speak to you.
This happiness must be a secret thing
Until you join your armies in the East;
Then I will flee to you, and wed you there,
Far from the menace of your brother's wrath.

PHILIBERT

My brother, my dear brother, what a wound
Have I now given thee! I'll go to him,

Kneel at his feet, and tell him all this thing.
Alas, I fear he loves you! Conrad, Conrad,
I had not meant to harm you! What avail
Are useless words when I have done this thing?
At least he shall know straightway all the truth,
And in his love he'll wish my happiness,
And give me even the woman that he loves,
When he has heard she loves me.

CLEMENTIA

This is madness.

'Twill be our death, our ruin: do not speak.
You do not know; I've seen him all my life.
I know him best, surely I know him best!

PHILIBERT

Who understands you deeper, he or I?
The king who dwelt beside you all his life,
Or I who came so lately? Let me go.

CLEMENTIA

Stay, Philibert; you rush upon your death,
And waste our happiness. You love me not

If you oppose me here. Be ruled by me,
And save us both: you shall fly silently,
And I will join you. We'll be happy there
Together, oh, together! Would you see
Me wedded to the king?

PHILIBERT

That shall not be.
Love plays the tyrant over your slight strength.
Go in and rest.

CLEMENTIA

You'll yield?

PHILIBERT

No, dearest, no.

CLEMENTIA

God give me courage to endure my life
Which you have blessed—and broken.

PHILIBERT

Clementia,
I would not have less worthy by a hair
This man your love makes precious to himself.

CLEMENTIA

Oh, had you yielded I had loved you less;
You would be less yourself, the self I love.
Go then, and bear my heart along with you.
[*He goes.*]

SCENE II

The Eagle's Eyrie at night; CONRAD and LUIGI.

LUIGI

A woman's light affection, dear my lord,
Flits, like the moth poising on careless wing,
Now here, now there, impelled by every breeze;
Doubt not, when once this Philibert is gone,
Clementia will turn to you again.

CONRAD

Ah, gone, but where? Where shalt thou go, poor
fool?
Into the silent shadow, where our dreams
Only can follow.

LUIGI

Would you have him stay
To cheat you of your kingdom, of your crown,
Of all men's praise, and of Clementia's love?
This cuckoo that you lifted to the nest,
Who shoves us all to earth—

CONRAD

It is enough.

Luigi, go hastily, despatch your men,
And sound the bell. I'll bid him wait a space,
On some pretext, until I shall return;
And I will join you in the hall below
Where others are, and bring you back with me;
And we will have our swords out, ere they come
In answer to our shouts.

LUIGI

You'll not remain?

'Twere better so, I think. You are quite safe;
I've told them how you wear your robe and crown:
They will not touch you.

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CONRAD

No, I will not stay.
I will not watch and see my brother slain.

LUIGI

Sire, as you please.

A servant enters.

SERVANT

Prince Philibert is here,
And humbly craves an audience.

CONRAD

Let him come.

LUIGI

How pat this falls upon the very heels
Of our discourse! Now, we've not sent for him.
[*He goes.*]

PHILIBERT *enters.*

CONRAD

What do you wish?

PHILIBERT

I want to be with you:

Alone with you, to rout these phantasies
That other men have conjured into life
And called their king. Conrad, I know you best,
Better than all these courtiers and these lords,
Do I not, brother? Your kind gracious self,
To whom I turn as wanderers turn home,
Secure of welcome, shelter, and good cheer;—
Heart of my brother, say I know you best!

CONRAD

To answer that, I first must know myself,
And that I do not. You are ill at ease,
There is some secret tugging at your lips.

PHILIBERT

Your love's a magnet to draw forth my thoughts.
Best to be brief if I can find the words.
Conrad, there's a conspiracy afoot
To set me on the throne and cast you down:
They told me of it scarce three hours ago.
This was the very thing our father feared,—

I seemed to walk within a life once lived
While they did speak; I followed on his thought.

CONRAD

What did you say?

PHILIBERT

I'll tell you what I can;
I have forgot my words. I spoke in wrath;
Small wonder, was it? Why, I told them all
I was not such a traitor as they thought.
Dear Conrad, they have grievances enough,
And just ones, too. You have not governed well,
You know that, brother; but it's not my place
To tell you so; these elder men will speak.
I said that you were young and would have been
Advised had they spoke sooner, as they ought.
I told them, what they knew as well as I,
How admirable and how great you were.

CONRAD

How can I know you would not buy your life,
Escaping from a failing, hopeless cause

By means of this betrayal of the rest?
There is no man, I think, but would be king
If it were possible. You do not speak.
Reply!

PHILIBERT

My ears have done an unkind act
That they should hear my brother speak this word.

CONRAD

I did but test you. I am satisfied.
I knew this plot; it could not reach success.
'Tis but a few; we are well rid of them.

PHILIBERT

Conrad, be not deceived by such a hope.
I see I cannot spare you any jot.
Know, then, the army doth revolt to me,
The people of this town, and, at the court,
All that are stable, wise, or eminent,
Even your chancellor. You must comply.

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CONRAD

How can I go abroad thus stripped and stark?

PHILIBERT

Go forth, and prove how ignorant they were
Of your true greatness; strike them to your feet
In admiration of your clemency,
Your wisdom, and your valour. Make them know
How great a king they should have lost in you.
You shall be phoenix rising through these flames
New-born in majesty. All shall be well.

CONRAD

I cannot think to-night.

PHILIBERT

Sleep deep to-night,
Dear Conrad, and to-morrow we shall talk;
With the fresh day we shall have happy thoughts.
And this remember, as you lie at rest:
Your brother loves you better than his life,
And hand in hand we shall win easily;
You shall be brain, and I will be your arm,
To fight your battles. Do you know, even now

My heart draws nearer to you than before,
And that's their gift who plotted. Come, sit here,
And let me kneel beside you, tell you first
How, far away, I loved you, how that day
The word, *You have a brother*, came like dawn
To show a world that sparkled into life.
I prayed that you might always smile on me,
That I might be a blessing round your ways,
To compass you with service. And to-night
I've come to give you pain. You brought me here,
Defying the known peril, gave me place
Beside you, set my arms about your neck:
You might have left me there to pine through life.
And now, against my will—what shall I say?
Conrad, I love Clementia. There's the whole.
Here, take my sword and drive it through my heart,
Unless you can forgive me, for no word
That tongue hath found can utter what I feel.
I had not thought she loved me till this hour.
I meant to join my soldiers, go away
Till I could conquer what was in my breast,
But then, to-night—we spoke—I scarce know how.
I left her, and I came to tell you.

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CONRAD

So!

You might have run with her, and sought your men,—
These soldiers are your slaves,—and fled with her;
Why did you not?

PHILIBERT

If you can ask me why,
Strike home against my bosom.

CONRAD

Keep your sword:
Almost I think you wish to die.

PHILIBERT

Not now;
Clementia loves me.

CONRAD

Fool, to speak her name!
Go on; you've more to say.

PHILIBERT

No more to say.

CONRAD

You love her. Do not say, then, you love me.

PHILIBERT

Never so much, since love enkindles love!
Come, prove my heart, and tell me what to bear
Or what to venture, for I cannot talk;
I see you suffer, and my words are gone.

CONRAD

I love Clementia; I have not known,
Till now, how much I loved her. It is strange,
Yet not so strange as that I do love you.
Yet so I do, and know not why I do.
You've taken everything, all that I have.
I have thought clearly all my life till now,
And seen my way, and taken what I would,
And never was perplexed. (*A bell sounds above them*)

Hark! There's the bell.

This world has ruined me: I was not born
So poor a thing as men have made of me.
I dreamed the potent alchemy of love
Might gild my baser metal.

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PHILIBERT

Can my prayers
Avail to help thee in this strait, my king?

CONRAD

I cannot tell; I travel unknown ways.
Have I been blind before and now do see?
Or are those visionary lights you bear,
Those things that guide you, Philibert? No, no;
I look into your eyes and understand:
I have not ever found so true a heart.
Stay, take this robe about you—'tis a whim,
I want to see you thus. Here rests the crown.
[*He sets the crown on the head of PHILIBERT.*
It doth become you well.

PHILIBERT

I like this not.
[*He puts up his hand to remove the crown, but CONRAD stays him.*
Your hand is cold. Dear brother, take your crown.

CONRAD

You must descend at once, and show yourself
In the great hall. The chancellor is there :
This is my answer to conspiracy.

PHILIBERT

I do not like your whim.

CONRAD

Yet do my will.

PHILIBERT

I cannot leave you; you are very pale.

CONRAD

Go, boy. Why, what obedience is this?

PHILIBERT

Will you retire? Shall I send some one here?
Where shall I put these robes of yours?

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CONRAD

O heaven,
You do torment me! Do as you are bid.
Is there no one that will obey me now?
You halt about my wishes and my whims,
And do not do the one thing I command.
Away, and send the army if you will,
Or hell and all its devils. Go—go—go!
Ah, Philibert, you are not kind to me,
Not even kind, to stay.

PHILIBERT

How can I go
And leave you thus?

CONRAD

I have a wager on;
If you delay I lose my choicest horse.
On your allegiance, hasten.

PHILIBERT

Conrad, no!
I cannot leave you lonely in this tower;
The more, that you are shaken and look ill.

CONRAD

Give me some wine. (*He drinks*) See, now, the fit
has passed.

I've wagered that you can deceive the guard
By likeness unto me. Assume my voice:
'Tis all a jest.

PHILIBERT

Your eyes are full of tears;
You are not used to weep.

CONRAD

I'll say, for her!
Yield for Clementia's sake: if you do stay,
I swear, by the great love I bear to her,
You will not see her more.

PHILIBERT

I shall not go:
There's something hidden; I will know the truth.
Brother, life bound us close before we knew.
Oh, by that union that hath held us here,
That love, I conjure you to answer me!

CONRAD

You asked a test of love: obey me now,
Or look not on my face while you shall live.

PHILIBERT

Then, most reluctantly, I shall go down. [*He goes.*]

CONRAD

He hath not left me more of space on earth
Than answers for a grave. Yet 'tis enough!
And Luigi, too, is false; he comes not back.

The murderers rush in.

Here is the verge of life. I'll drive this wretch
Along before to clear my path to hell!

[*They fight; he kills one, but is overpowered and wounded.*]

LUIGI *enters.*

LUIGI

What horror's here! Villains, you slay the king!
[He drives them out.]

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

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CONRAD

I did you wrong, poor Luigi; are you hit?

LUIGI

No time to tell what went amiss. Your hand!
Quickly, your hand! Here's mercy: I shall die.

[He raises the king's hand to his lips and dies.]

PHILIBERT *enters, followed by RENÉE, CLEMENTIA,
ANDREA, and several nobles.*

RENÉE

(Taking the King in her arms) Quick, quick, a surgeon! He will bleed to death.

CONRAD

Here's one that loved me, too.

PHILIBERT

O brother, brother!

CONRAD

Weep not so sore,—'tis altogether best,—
Nor seek to know the way that this befell.

An evil, scorpion-like, turned on itself,
And died of its own sting, and rid the world.
Ill things have feeble voices, and soon die,
Perishing into great, engulfing peace,
And night and sweet oblivion cover them.
If any memory of my lost life
Shall linger with you, dwell upon this hour,
And be the rest forgot. I love you now.

PHILIBERT

O Conrad, live! You are the worthier king.
I am unlearned in governing, unskilled.
Rude and untimely death, forbear thy stroke!
The sea floods over us: Artacia's lost!

CONRAD

Give him your hand, Clementia. That is well.

[Dies.

[*All kneel, PHILIBERT stands gazing upon him. ANDREA, rising, approaches PHILIBERT, kneels, and kisses his hand.*

Act III

The Coming of Philibert

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ALL

God guard the king!

PHILIBERT

And guard Artacia!

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